

A CORRESPONDENCE

BETWEEN A COMMITTEE OF THE

North Baptist Church and Granville St. Baptist Church,

HALIFAX,

RESPECTING A MEMBER OF THE FORMER CHURCH RECEIVED BY THE LATTER
WITHOUT ANY LETTER OF DISMISSION FROM THE NORTH CHURCH.

ALSO,

The Vote of the North Church respecting the Report of their Committee.

HALIFAX, N. S.

"Nova Scotia Printing Company,"

1872.

AK
B5
.C81

in the
report
Church
ence

appro
the l

and
and
consi
distri

T
Frid
with
churc
by G
mem
Mrs.
discip
prece

HA

A
unan
J. Mc
Churc
city,

MINUTE OF MEETING.

At a Church Meeting held on the evening of Tuesday, 4th June, 1872, in the Church Vestry, and specially called for the purpose of hearing the report of the Committee appointed to correspond with Granville Street Church, &c., &c., in reference to the case of Mrs. Maria Moir; a correspondence and their report of this date having been read—

Resolved unanimously, that the North Baptist Church of Halifax hereby approves the action taken by its Committee in their behalf, and directs that the Report and Correspondence be filed among the Church Records.

Resolved further, that the said Committee continue in office for the present, and if they think it necessary or prudent, have power to print such Report and Correspondence, and have 500 copies, or such number as they may consider likely to be required, struck off for the use of the church and for distribution under direction of said Committee.

(Signed)

ARTHUR W. CLARK,
Church Clerk.

REPORT.

The Committee appointed by the North Baptist Church of Halifax, on Friday evening, the 17th November, 1871, "to conduct a correspondence with the Granville Street Church of Halifax, and if necessary with any other church or churches of the Central Association on the subject of the reception by Granville Street Church into their fellowship and Communion, as a member, without any letter of dismission from the North Baptist Church, of Mrs. Maria Moir, a member of said North Baptist Church and under its discipline, and that they report to this church as occasion shall require"—now present their first Report accordingly. See correspondence hereto appended.

J. McCULLY, }
D. THOMPSON, } *Committee.*
J. PARSONS, }

HALIFAX, 4th June, 1872.

CORRESPONDENCE.

"VESTRY OF THE NORTH BAPTIST CHAPEL,
Goltingen Street, Halifax, Friday evening, 17th November, 1871.

At the close of the usual prayer meeting it was moved, seconded and unanimously resolved, as follows, viz.: That Deacons David Thompson and J. McCully, and brother J. Parsons be a Committee of the North Baptist Church to conduct a correspondence with the Granville Street Church of this city, and if necessary, with any other church or churches of the Central

Association, on the subject of the reception by Granville Street Church into their fellowship and communion, as a member, without any letter of dismission from the North Baptist Church, of Mrs. Maria Moir, a member of said North Baptist Church, and under its discipline—and that they report to this church as occasion shall require."

Extract from the Book of Church Records of North Baptist Church.

HALIFAX, 30TH NOV., 1871.

To the Granville Street Church, worshipping in Halifax, its Pastor, Officers and Members.

DEAR BRETHREN,—The foregoing Resolution constitutes our authority for addressing you on a subject of commanding interest, involving consequences of great importance in the view of the North Baptist Church.

So long ago as the month of February, 1857, Mrs. Maria Moir, referred to in the foregoing Resolution brought a letter to the North Baptist Church from the Sackville Church, certifying that she was a member of that church in good and regular standing, and recommending her to the watch-care and fellowship of the sister churches in Halifax. Having presented the letter and asked for admission, she was received into the communion and fellowship of the North Baptist Church, and the following entry was made in the Book of Records, by the then Clerk, as will appear :

"1857, February 6th, at one of the weekly meetings for lecture Mrs. Maria Moir presented a letter of dismission from the Sackville Church and was received, and on Sunday the 8th, received the right hand of fellowship."

For many years our sister Moir continued to walk in harmony and fellowship with the North Baptist Church. She was an exemplary useful member, attending with much regularity the Sunday and week day services, her husband and family rarely absent on the Sabbath.

Eventually, however, to the grief and disappointment of the Church, she gradually withdrew, and the matter for reasons hereinafter set forth became a case of discipline.

About or nearly four years ago sister Moir addressed to the present Pastor of the North Baptist Church a letter, a copy of which is as follows :

HALIFAX, DEC. 6TH, 1867.

REV. J. GOUCHER,—*Dear Sir,*—About two years ago I ceased attending at the North Church. My husband objected attending there, but was willing to attend the Tabernacle. I thought it my duty to attend with him. I have been attending the Granville Street Church since I left the Tabernacle. This accounts for my absence from the Church. As it is more convenient for me to attend the Granville Street Church, I would like to obtain my dismission, and unite with this Church. I hope and pray the North Church will prosper.

Yours, very truly,
(Signed)

MRS. M. C. MOIR.

Street Church into
letter of dismission
ber of said North
ort to this church
tist Church.

Nov., 1871.

Pastor, Officers

es our authority
ng consequences

Moir, referred to
ist Church from
church in good
are and fellow-
etter and asked
llowship of the
in the Book of

r lecture Mrs.
e Church and
of fellowship."
harmony and
mplary useful
t day services,

e Church, she
orth became a

resent Pastor
ws:

H, 1867.

ed attending
t was willing
nim. I have
nacle. This
avenient for
ain my dis-
rth Church

C. MOIR.

This letter, as a matter of course, was brought under the notice and consideration of the Church, and after delays and deferrings purposely extended and repeated as it appears, in order that our sister might place herself in a relation to the church that would justify them in furnishing her the usual letter of dismission, the Report subjoined and the Resolution accompanying it passed, and are to be found among the Church Records as follows:—

"NORTH BAPTIST CHURCH VESTRY,

Friday Evening, 14th Jan'y. 1870.

At the close of the regular prayer meeting, moved by Deacon McCully, seconded by Bro. D. McPherson and Resolved unanimously,—that the Pastor of the Church, and Deacon David Thompson and the mover, be a Committee to report to this church at an early day, upon the case of sister M. C. Moir.

REPORT.

The Committee appointed as above, after inquiry and upon examination into the facts and circumstances in connection with sister Moir, her standing and relation to the North Baptist Church of this city, report as follows:—

"They find on referring to the Records of the church, that sister Moir united with the church on the sixth day of Feb., 1857, having been received by letter.

"They further report that her walk and Christian deportment were so far as they can learn exemplary and unblamable for many years. She with her husband and family attended public worship with punctuality. Her frequent presence in the social meetings of the church, the active part taken by her occasionally in prayer and conference meetings, the liberality manifested in contributing towards the support of the cause, gave good testimony of her zeal and fidelity in the Master's cause for a long time.

"They find, however, that about the year 1865, for some cause unexplained sister Moir to the deep regret of the brethren and sisters, voluntarily withdrew from the meetings, public and social, as well as from the Communion of the church.

"Shortly after this event, it came to the knowledge of members that sister Moir was in the habit of attending at other places of worship, and they were informed and believe that she was communing with another church, or other churches not of the same faith and order as that of which she was a member. Her continued absence and neglect of duty became the cause of painful reflections in the minds of the brethren and sisters. Suitable means were adopted, and eventually a committee or committees, it would appear, from time to time waited upon her, and other efforts were exerted to win her back to the fellowship and communion of her church—for our sister was beloved and esteemed—but all proved unavailing. At rare intervals since she first systematically withdrew, sister Moir has appeared at our meetings, but these occasions have been very seldom indeed.

"An application for a dismission to join the Granville Street Church was

made by letter addressed to the present Pastor, on or about the 6th day of December, 1867, and the matter occupied the serious attention of the church, and as a result, a Committee consisting of Deacon Thompson and brother George E. Robins was appointed to wait upon sister Moir—who did so—and reported back to the church, substantially that before any letter of dismission could be granted, they had informed her she must first return and be reconciled to the church, of which she was still nominally at least a member, which was strongly recommended.

"That, it seems, has never been done, and how much soever her present position is to be regretted, it is an impossibility for the North Baptist Church truthfully to direct the usual letter to be written and signed on behalf of the Church, which upon its very face would be stamped with a want of veracity.

"Sister Moir's name under the circumstances detailed continues upon the roll of our membership, contrary perhaps to the practice and discipline adopted in many of our churches. But sister Moir is still affectionately remembered by many of the church, and even now, every facility consistent with duty, truthfulness and comity to sister churches would cheerfully, we believe, be afforded to enable our sister to be restored to the communion of saints, and to church fellowship. What the prerequisites to such an act, on the part of the North Baptist Church are, need not here be repeated.

"Your Committee recommend that a copy of this Report be furnished to sister Moir, and also to the Granville Street Church through their Pastor.

"All which is respectfully submitted,

(Signed)

J. McCULLY,
J. E. GOUCHER, } Committee.
D THOMPSON.

Vestry, North Baptist Church, Halifax, 17th Jan. 1870.

On reading the above report it was moved, seconded and resolved, that the same be adopted, and the recommendation therein contained be carried out by the Clerk of the Church, and copies be furnished as directed.

A copy of this report was duly prepared and forwarded to Mrs. Moir, and another furnished the Rev. Mr. Saunders, Pastor of the Granville Street Church, as the undersigned are given to understand from the Clerk of the North Baptist Church.

The unusual course of furnishing an independent sister church with a copy of the report was adopted because the Pastor of that church, and one or more of the Deacons, had personally interested themselves in Mrs. Moir's behalf, being desirous of obtaining for Mrs. Moir a dismission from the North Church to join the Granville Street Church, if the North Baptist Church could see their way clear to grant it. And lest the members of the Granville Street Church might suppose that the discipline the North Baptist Church were exercising was unnecessarily severe, or stricter than they or other churches would adopt in such a case, and desirous to perpetuate the kindly feeling and Christian intercourse that had ever obtained between the two city churches,

about the 6th day of
 ention of the church,
 mpson and brother
 r—who did so—and
 letter of dismission
 first return and be
 at least a member,

soever her present
 rth Baptist Church
 ed on behalf of the
 want of veracity.
 continues upon the
 ce and discipline
 still affectionately
 facility consistent
 old cheerfully, we
 he communion of
 o such an act, on
 repeated.

it be furnished to
 their Pastor.

} Committee.

resolved, that
 ined be carried
 ected.

Mrs. Moir, and
 Granville Street
 the Clerk of the

church with a
 h, and one or
 Moir's behalf,
 North Church
 ch could see
 Granville Street
 Church were
 her churches
 y feeling and
 ty churches,

it was considered advisable to put the Granville Street Church in full possession of all the facts as they existed in connection with the case of sister Moir.

Thus, then, matters stood when, to the great surprise of the North Baptist Church, it became rumoured—a rumour which has since, upon inquiry, been verified—that Mrs. Moir had been received by the Granville Street Church as a member of that church, and admitted to their fellowship; and that this had transpired during the autumn of 1871.

Unwilling to suppose that the sister city church would knowingly do or sanction any proceeding that could interfere with the discipline or weaken the influence of the North Baptist Church with and among its members, it was hoped that the Granville Street Church would themselves, ere this, have instituted such inquiries as would have obviated the necessity of any correspondence between the churches on this subject.

After the lapse many weeks, and not aware that the Granville Street Church of themselves, propose to adopt any action, the North Baptist Church consider it a duty they owe to themselves as well as to the Associated Churches to which they belong, that a proper understanding should be arrived at, in reference to the present and like cases.

Mrs. Moir became a member of the North Church *more than fourteen years ago*. From that date, February 1857, to the present she has been reckoned, and returned year by year, in our associational letters and denominational statistics, as a member of the North Baptist Church. Now, it is presumed, her name stands recorded on the list of members of both churches—a circumstance which uncorrected will tend to destroy the reliability of church statistics. But the undersigned respectfully desire to say to their brethren of Granville Street, that this even would be, perhaps, a small matter—compared with the injuries and difficulties likely to result, if members of a Baptist Church can, by any means, evade its discipline and find refuge in another church of the same faith and order. That Mrs. Moir was, for all these long years, a member of the North Baptist Church, her letter from the Sackville Church, our records already quoted, coupled with her own application for a dismission so late as December 1867, abundantly testify.

The undersigned have been given to understand that, after repeated applications—a former application for the same purpose having failed—the Sackville Church, whose connection with Mrs. Moir as a member, ceased in 1857, has furnished a letter or document upon which Mrs. Moir has been received by the Granville Street Church. How such an irregularity, as it seems to the undersigned, could be countenanced in the face of the well-known facts of this case, so destructive as it seems to them of all principle as understood and acted upon by Baptist Churches the wide world over—how this action on the part of the Sackville and Granville Streets Churches towards a sister church can be reconciled to what the North Baptist Church have hitherto understood to be the basis and substratum of denominational

unity, harmony, and co-operation—the undersigned are wholly at a loss to comprehend.

In the view of this matter taken by the undersigned, and they believe by the entire membership of the North Baptist Church—while they are unwilling to indulge in an unkind expression towards a sister church, or any of its officers or members, yet so subversive do they consider such proceedings, of all fraternal relation among churches (if, as in the present case, upon being clearly established, they remain unnoticed or unrectified) that they cannot too earnestly impress upon their sister church the desirability of such immediate action and explanation as will tend to restore the relation that has so long and unremittingly existed between the city churches.

If one Baptist Church receives into its fellowship the excluded member of another church—or if, while under discipline, a member applies to a church with which he or she had been previously connected, and thence obtains a second letter of dismission—what its form or contents may be, we stop not here to inquire—if in either case a Baptist Church of the same faith and order opens its doors and receives the excluded member or one under discipline, the bond that unites Baptist Churches in associational relation cannot, as we view the matter, be long maintained. And assuming the facts in the present case to be as above represented (and the vouchers referred to in corroboration are accessible to the Granville Street Church or any committee desirous of examining them)—the undersigned again express their strong desire and hope that such measures will be at once adopted by the Granville Street Church, as will obviate further action on the part and behalf of the North Baptist Church.

J. McCULLY,
D. THOMPSON, } Committee
J. PARSONS,

HALIFAX, DECEMBER 14TH, 1871.

To the North Baptist Church:

DEAR BRETHREN,—The letter of your Committee has been placed before us.

The following is a copy of the letter of dismission on which sister Moir was received into our church:—

"The Baptist Church of Sackville, To the Granville Street Baptist Church of Halifax:

"DEAR BRETHREN,—This is to certify that Mrs. Wm. Moir is a member in good and regular standing with us, and at her own request is hereby dismissed for the purpose of uniting with you. When she has so united, her connection with us will cease.

Done by order of the Church,
"FANCIS WEBBER, Ch. Clerk."

Sackville, Halifax County, Aug. 12, 1871.

Some little difficulty, we understand, has arisen in reference to Mrs. Moir's membership—the North Church thinking she had united there. No

record of her dismissal, however, is in our books, and we know no reason why we cannot commend her to your fellowship.

F. W.

She was received on the 1st September, and the following record made: "Mrs. William Moir was received as a member on the presentation of a letter from the Baptist Church of Sackville." And the following memorandum was afterwards made in our church book: "Note—Sept. 4. Notified the Sackville Church by letter of Mrs. Moir's reception."

It might have been more prudent for us to have deferred receiving sister Moir, till we had ascertained that the Sackville Church and the North Church had formally settled the matter of Mrs. Moir's membership, as some of us at least had been led to believe that they had informally but amicably arranged the difficulty. One of the Deacons of the North Church told our Pastor that there was nothing on their books to show that sister Moir had ever been dismissed from Sackville Church to join the North Church. The Pastor of the Sackville Church had said that there was no minute on the books of the Sackville Church to show that sister Moir had ever been dismissed to join the North Church, and that no letter had ever been received from the North Church notifying the Sackville Church that sister Moir had been received. The Pastor of the Sackville Church also informed our Pastor that he had conversed with the Pastor and one or more members of the North Church relative to sister Moir's membership, and they had agreed with him that it would be the better way for the Sackville Church to give her a dismission to join the Granville Street Church.

The report of your Committee on Mrs. Moir's case, dated January 17th, 1870, was received and presented to brethren of our church, as far as it was regarded necessary to meet the object of the paper.

Mrs. Moir, so far as we know, has never admitted that she ever united with the North Church. Our Pastor and others, who assumed that she had forgotten the occasion of her reception, over-persuaded her to apply to the North Church for a dismission.

We heartily concur in all you say as to the respect which one Baptist Church should have for the discipline of another. We can assure the North Church that we have always acted in good faith towards them, and it is our purpose to pursue the same course in the future.

If any further correspondence may be deemed necessary by you, you will please furnish us with a copy of the letter on which Mrs. Moir was received by you. Also, inform us whether the Sackville Church was notified at the time of sister Moir's reception by you. We will then correspond with the Sackville Church, with a view of ascertaining the exact grounds on which they regarded Mrs. Moir as a member, when dismissing her to us.

On behalf of Granville Street Church,

E. M. SAUNDERS,
ALEX. ROBINSON,
E. H. EATON, } Committee.

HALIFAX, DEC. 25TH, 1871.

To the Granville Street Church, worshipping in Halifax, its Pastor, Officers, and Members.

DEAR BRETHREN,—Under date of the 30th November, the undersigned addressed you, on the subject of your having received into your fellowship, Mrs. Moir, without any letter of dismission, a member of the North Baptist Church. In that communication, the undersigned were careful to inform you of the authority they possessed to correspond with the Granville Street Church, it being nothing less than a resolution unanimously adopted by the Church, a copy of which accompanied our letter.

Under such circumstances, it might have been expected that the Granville Street Church would have addressed their reply to the Committee authorized to conduct such a correspondence instead of addressing it direct to the North Baptist Church, under cover to the clerk. Why this course should be pursued, or what the motive in thus seeming to ignore the existence and functions of such a Committee whose plenary powers were expressly communicated (which perhaps may be, and for the present they will assume to have been unintentional) lest attention should be diverted from the main question under consideration, we prefer just now not to inquire into.

The copy of the letter brought by Mrs. Moir and upon which she sought and obtained admission to the North Baptist Church, and by which, on the ensuing Sunday she received "the right hand of fellowship," as per copy of minutes extract from the church record, in the letter of the undersigned of the 30th November is as follows :—

(Copy of letter.)

"This may certify that the bearer, Mrs. Maria Moir, is a member in good standing with the Baptist Church in Sackville, N. S., and we hereby recommend her to the watch-care, and fellowship, of the sister churches in Halifax."

T. H. PORTER, *Pastor.*

Labelled in handwriting of clerk, Mrs. Moir's letter, Feb. 7th, 1857.

The undersigned observe what a committee of your church authorized to write the letter of the 14th inst., say in references to private conversations with individuals of the North Church held by the pastor of your church and the pastor of Sackville Church. If the Granville Street Church, its officers and members, in consequence of such conversations, have acted under a misapprehension of the existing facts of this case, all that the North Baptist Church could, or would, or have any right to expect is, that when the facts are patent, and clear, and manifest, as they are set forth in a former letter, and in the present communication, namely: that Mrs. Moir presented the foregoing letter to the North Church, as a letter of dismission from the Sackville Church, upon it received "the right hand of fellowship," and walked with the North Church for upwards of ten years, enjoying all its rights and privileges without so much as a doubt ever expressed or whispered of the

rela
and
ano
plai
and
to t
chur

Past
they
a pa
like.
Nor
br
fici
Moir
12th
North
hour
obvi

Y
that
ledge
be e
sonal
your
Mrs.
Moir
in co
thing
broug
ville

P
visite
and t
discip
to the

A
festly
prefer
is ind

W
Moir's
discov

relation sustained, and until the discipline of the Church was being enforced, and even then, not until, as a means of escaping from it, by the device of another letter from Sackville had suggested itself; if now when this is all made plainly to appear to the Granville Street Church, they rectify their mistake, and so far as the North Church and its members are concerned, restore them to the "*Status a quo*," then this unpleasant controversy so far as these two churches are concerned will doubtless terminate.

The undersigned referring again to the conversations spoken of as held with Pastor, deacon or member, wish it to be clearly understood that the Church they represent speaks only by its clerk, or by officers specially delegated for a particular purpose, as in the present case, at associational gatherings, or the like. It being acknowledged then that the report of the Committee of the North Church, Jan. 17th, 1870, came to the knowledge of your church or the brethren through the Pastor, the undersigned do think that it disclosed sufficient facts if they have not escaped attention at the time of receiving Mrs. Moir, 1st Sep., (not to refer to the note appended to the Sackville letter of 12th August.) to have called for delay, and further inquiry. The Churches North and Granville, worship side by side, a delay therefore of twenty-four hours would have satisfied to obtain all the information required, and so have obviated this undesirable correspondence.

Your Committee say, "Mrs. Moir, so far as we know, has never admitted that she was united with the North Church," what the extent of the knowledge of your Committee as such may be, the undersigned cannot of course, be expected to know. But this they do know, that they were all three personally present on one occasion, about, or a little before 17th Jan. 1870, when your present pastor attended in the vestry of the North Baptist Church at Mrs. Moir's request, as expressed, and at one of its meetings to obtain for Mrs. Moir a letter of dismission, to join the Granville Street Church, and it was in consequence of that application and the impossibility to grant a letter as things then stood, that the Church decided to appoint the Committee that brought in the report referred to, and recommended a copy to be sent to Granville Street Church.

Previous to Jan. 1870, a Committee appointed by the North Baptist Church visited Mrs. Moir three different times, to induce her to return to the Church and become reunited to it, and thereby prevent the necessity for further discipline, and never did Mrs. Moir speak to the Committee of not belonging to the North Baptist Church.

As to the Sackville letter of 12th August, 1871, and its contents so manifestly irregular and at variance with all understood principles, the undersigned prefer not to speak of, or refer to it in the present correspondence further than is indispensable.

Whether any letter was ever written to Sackville to notify them of Mrs. Moir's reception into the North Baptist Church, the undersigned are unable to discover.

With the above explanations the undersigned hope that the Granville Street Church will now see their way clear promptly to remove the difficulty that has occurred between the two City Churches—churches that have so long and so pleasantly existed side by side, respecting each the discipline of the other, having so many objects in common, and represented in the same Association—and that an early reply to this letter will afford the desired intelligence.

In conclusion, the undersigned have respectfully to request that any further correspondence be addressed to them in their official capacity. Subscribing themselves meanwhile as before.

J. McCULLY, }
D. THOMPSON, } Committee.
J. PARSONS. }

HALIFAX, JANUARY 4TH, 1872.

To the Committee appointed by the North Baptist Church, relative to Mrs. Moir.

DEAR BRETHREN,—Before replying to your letter of the 25th ult., we send you the questions written below, which we intend to forward to the Sackville Church. If you desire to put any cross-questions, will you please furnish us with them and we will send both, together with the letter on which we received Mrs. Moir and the letter following:

“This may certify that the bearer, Mrs. Maria Moir is a member in good and regular standing with the Baptist Church in Sackville, N. S., and we hereby recommend her to the watch-care and fellowship of the sister churches in Halifax.”

T. H. PORTER, *Pastor.*

1.—Was the letter of which the above is a copy, furnished to Mrs. Moir by your late Pastor, by the direction and vote of the Sackville Church? What do your records show in this particular point?

2.—If it was given by vote of the Church, was it intended to be a letter of dismission to Mrs. Moir to be used in joining either of the Baptist Churches in Halifax? If not to be so used, what purpose did the church intend it to serve?

3.—Was the said letter given by your late Pastor without the vote of the church, and if so given, what end in your opinion had he in view in giving it?

4.—Was the Sackville Church ever notified of Mrs. Moir's reception by the North Church? If so, please furnish us a copy of such notification.

5.—Supposing you had granted a letter of dismission to Mrs. Moir to join either of the City Churches and had never received notice of her reception by one of such churches, would you consider her still your member?

6.—Did Mrs. Moir form one of the number you reported to the Association up to the time of granting the letter of dismission to the Granville Street Church?

7.—Have you ever received any written communications from the North Church relative to Mrs. Moir? If you have please furnish us with a copy.

8.—Is the letter of dismission of Mrs. Moir to the Granville Street Church in your usual form?

9.—Have you been notified of the admission by Granville Street Church of Mrs. Moir? And do you regard her as regularly a member of the Granville Street Church?

By order the Church,

E. M. SAUNDERS,
ALEX. ROBINSON,
B. H. EATON. } *Committee.*

HALIFAX, 13TH JANUARY, 1872.

To the Granville Street Church :

DEAR BRETHREN,—Your letter of the 4th inst. the undersigned have received.

The undersigned have no desire to intervene in any correspondence about to be conducted by the Granville Street Church with the Sackville Church. How the latter church keep their records—or what their intentions may have been—whether the late pastor had or had not authority to grant the letter in question, which, though without date, was received by the North Church so long ago as 6th February, 1859, as appears by the endorsement thereon, and the church records—or whether any notification of Mrs. Moir's reception was sent, or, if sent, filed, with a variety of other matters inquired into by the interrogations furnished—the undersigned feel that the North Church has no concern.

For these reasons, and because the undersigned have so fully stated their complaint as to the course pursued by the Granville Street Church in receiving one of their members without the usual letter of dismission—they must respectfully decline the invitation to interrogate another church among other things respecting the motives of a pastor whose praise is still in many of the churches, and who has long since gone to his reward.

We remain, &c., &c.,

J. McCULLY,
DAVID THOMPSON,
J. PARSONS. } *Committee.*

HALIFAX, 12TH MARCH, 1872.

To the Granville Street Church :

DEAR BRETHREN,—In your letter signed by a committee, by order of the church, dated 4th January last, addressed to the undersigned—referring to ours of the 25th December, 1871—we were given to understand that we might, ere long, expect some definite reply. Two months and upwards have now elapsed since the date of your last communication. The undersigned are desirous of reporting the results of the correspondence they were authorized to conduct on this painful unpleasant subject, to the church appointing them.

The undersigned vain hope that, if not already done, the Granville Street Church will promptly take such measures as will ensure a continuance of

those amicable relations which obtained heretofore between the two city churches.

Inviting and awaiting an early reply, that the correspondence may be closed, the undersigned, as heretofore,

Remain yours, &c.,

J. McCULLY,
DAVID THOMPSON, } Committee.
J. PARSONS,

HALIFAX, MARCH, 18TH, 1872.

DEAR SIR,—We regret that we have not been in a position to answer your last letter yet on Mrs. Moir's matter, not having any reply to our letter to the Sackville Church. We are writing them for a reply, and shall not delay our answer after receiving theirs.

Yours truly,

B. H. EATON, *for the Committee.*

HON. MR. JUSTICE McCULLY.

HALIFAX, APRIL 3RD, 1872.

To the Committee appointed by the North Baptist Church relative to Mrs. Moir :

DEAR BRETHREN,—In replying to your second letter on this subject it is proper we should trace the steps which have caused the delay that has taken place since the receipt of your letter. That letter having rendered it necessary that the matter should be more fully discussed than it was in our reply to your first communication. we thought right to interrogate the church who had dismissed Mrs. Moir to join with us, with a view to elicit more fully the facts connected with the whole matter. In doing so we thought it would not be fair to send our questions without first exhibiting them to you, and giving you an opportunity of at the same time putting to the Sackville Church such cross-questions as you might desire. Having submitted our questions to you with a request that you would furnish us with any cross-questions you wished to put, and having received your reply to the effect that you did not desire to join with us in the proposed interrogation, (of which we shall have more to say further on) we forwarded our questions to the Sackville Church, with a request that they would answer them at as early a date as might be convenient. After waiting a long time for a reply, without receiving any, one of our Committee below named addressed an informal note to one of your number accounting for our delay in answering your second letter, and at the same time also sent a note to the Clerk of the Sackville Church, requesting an early answer to our letter so them. Your letter of the 12th March did not reach us until these two letters had been written and sent. Having answered your letter of the 12th March, before it came to our knowledge, we did not of course consider that any further answer was necessary after we had received it. We have since received a reply from

the Sackville Church, and are now in a position to go fully into the matters under consideration. We regret there should have been so much delay, but you will see that it has arisen through no fault of ours.

Having thus briefly traced the steps which have been taken since the receipt of your second letter, we must turn our attention to the complaint with which your second letter commences. We do not at all regret that you have raised the point complained of, as in our view it is a matter of commanding interest, involving consequences of great importance to all concerned. Your complaint is that we addressed our reply to your first letter to the church and forwarded it to the clerk of the church instead of addressing and forwarding it to you, the committee appointed by the church. In the first place let us assure you that in doing as we did we had no thought of ignoring your existence and functions. It was addressed and sent to the church without for a moment considering whether it should be sent to the church or to you. It was done without thought or consideration, and the only reason we can give why it happened to be addressed to the church and not to you is that we presume we were acting simply from the force of habit—a habit which had been contracted from following principles which we regarded as sound and scriptural. But had the question then arisen in our minds whether we should address our letter to you or to the church, though we might have concluded to address it to you, we should certainly have expressed our surprise that we had been addressed upon a matter, such as the one under consideration, by a committee of the church, and not by the church itself.

And our attention having been so pointedly turned to this matter by you let us further say in this connection that the powers granted to you by the North Church are so indefinite as in our view to render it impossible to ascertain what they are. You are appointed a committee "to conduct a correspondence." This is what you are pleased to term your "plenary powers." Had we at once informed you we declined to discuss this matter with a committee whose powers, though they may be "plenary," are yet so indefinite and uncertain as not to be ascertainable from any sources open to us, we believe we should have only done what correct principles would guide us to do. Take one point for example from your second letter. In that letter you, a committee of the North Church, call upon us to restore you and Mrs. Moir to the *status a quo*, and we presume you expect from us in reply a definite answer on that point. It does not appear that you were commissioned to make this demand, and upon your reporting to the North Church it may be they will never make such a demand. If we answer your letter we may therefore be refusing to do what the North Church has not and may never ask us to do. We should not be placed in this position, and yet we shall, as we go on, answer your letter on all points, regarding this as under the circumstances the best way of arriving at an understanding upon the questions involved. But before quitting this point let us ask you if we might not make the same complaint which you have made. Our reply to your first letter was not the reply of a committee. It was, it is true, prepared by a

committee, but as soon as they had submitted it to us, and it was adopted by us, the committee were no longer any more responsible for what it contained than any other member of our body—and yet in the same letter in which you complain of being ignored you seek to fix the authorship of our letter on a committee. You have only to read over your reply again to see how unfair this is.

Having said so much on this matter which, though not connected with the main questions at issue, is yet one of so much importance, and one which we beg to commend to your mature consideration, we shall proceed to one or two other preliminary matters, hastening to the main points with all reasonable dispatch.

We must express our surprise that in your second letter you entirely ignore some things we had written concerning our reception of Mrs. Moir. In regard to that reception without first communicating with you, we admitted that "it might have been more prudent for us to have deferred receiving sister Moir till we had ascertained that the Sackville Church and the North Church had formally settled the matter of Mrs. Moir's membership, as some of us at least had been led to believe that they had informally but amicably arranged the difficulty." You write as if you had never read this language and complain that we did not delay the matter. It is difficult after all however, to see what good could have resulted from delay. And we are not sure that we should have treated the Sackville Church properly by delaying for an hour the reception of one who came bearing a letter of dismission from that church, drawn in the ordinary and regular form. We were either bound to act at once upon that letter or throw it back in the face of our sister church. We presume that those of our number who did not know the particulars of the dispute as to the membership of Mrs. Moir, acted upon the letter as upon any other letter of a similar kind, and that those who were aware of the facts connected with that dispute believed as we told you in our last letter that the difficulty had been informally and amicably arranged, and that the course that was then being pursued in receiving Mrs. Moir was in fact the very course that had thus been informally agreed upon as the best to be taken under the circumstances.

Coming then to the main point in issue, your complaint is that we being a church belonging to the same Association as the church whose Committee you are, received into our communion and fellowship as a member without any letter of dismission from the North Church, one who was a member of the North Church and under its discipline. Now, if such a complaint as this could be established we at once admit that we should have to acknowledge our wrong and do what we could to make amends, but we are fully convinced and shall endeavor to show you that no such complaint can be fairly laid at our doors. And the complaint, we shall endeavor to show, fails to have any force because it rests upon the assumed fact that Mrs. Moir was a member of the North Church which we believe we can show is not the fact.

Among Baptists associated as the churches of our Associations are, five

things necessarily combine to constitute a complete transference of a member from one church to another. In the first place, the member who seeks to terminate his connection with the church to which he belongs, requests a letter of dismission to join another church. Upon due consideration the church grants him a letter of dismission. With this letter application is made to be admitted a member of another church. The application is granted, and in the last place and to complete the transfer the second church notifies the first of the reception of the applicant. The transfer is then complete to all intents and purposes and *not till then*.

Now, keeping these points before us, let us see if Mrs. Moir ever was a member of the North Baptist Church of Halifax. Did she ever apply to the Sackville Church for a letter of dismission to join any other church? She informs us she *never did*. The letter she actually got affords strong evidence she never did. In the second place, did the Sackville Church ever grant her a letter of dismission to join another church? It would have been strange if they had done so without being solicited, but the evidence it seems to us is overwhelming that they did not. The letter which Mrs. Moir brought to the North Baptist Church, and upon which alone their claim to place her name on their books must rest, is as follows—mark its language well as this is the pivot of the whole matter.

"This may certify that the bearer, Mrs. Maria Moir is a member of good and regular standing with the Baptist Church in Sackville, N. S., and we hereby recommend her to the watch-care and fellowship of the sister churches in Halifax.

(Signed)

T. H. PORTER, *Pastor.*"

Is this a letter of dismission? Does it contain the slightest intimation either that Mrs. Moir desired to terminate her connection with the Sackville Church, or that the Sackville Church had consented to her joining another church? And if it contains no such intimation, is not the presumption irresistible that such termination of connection was not intended? Is the letter written by order of the church or does it bear the signature of the Clerk of the church? No. The letter is in the form and is what is universally known among Baptists as a letter of recommendation, and it is given as such letters usually are by the Pastor. This letter does not purport to proceed from the church, and there is no likelihood that it did proceed from the church or that the church knew that it had been given to Mrs. Moir. Could the North Church upon such a letter proceed to receive Mrs. Moir as a member of that body? Even in secular matters where we are guided so much by mere human legislative rights, are not so easily transferred as they would be in such a case, supposing reception to have proceeded on such a letter. A servant bound to his master by articles desires to visit another town or city, and obtains from his master a letter certifying him to be a good servant and recommending him to the kind attention of those to whom the letter might be presented. Would such a letter give that servant any right to enter into the service of another master and repudiate the articles binding

him to his first master? Would not all the obligations which existed between the servant and his first master remain intact unless that master and the servant had mutually consented to dissolve these obligations? A. says to B, I am about to leave this neighbourhood for a season, I would thank you to have an eye to that excellent field of mine yonder. What right let us ask would B. have to enter that field and on A.'s return withhold the possession of it from him, or if A. meanwhile had conveyed his title to C. what right would B. have to dispute the possession of it with C.? If we could find a state of society in which rights could be transferred by such methods we should find the foundations of society broken up and destroyed.

But rising to the sacred matters connected with the government of bodies guided by Divine statutes and precepts, we must redouble our vigilance and care, not to transgress the boundaries set up for us. If we are to have regard to the "basis and substratum of denominational unity, harmony and co-operation," we must be exceedingly careful how we seek to become entitled to the rights of others. To our minds, nothing would be more likely to upheave that "substratum" than one church claiming and persisting in claiming a right to a member of a sister church, without that sister church ever having given up its right to such member. Mrs. Moir came with a letter of recommendation, and with nothing more. Its every word testifies that it is simply and only a letter of recommendation. No vote that the North Church could pass, based on that letter, could make Mrs. Moir a member of that church. What matters it that she applied to the North Church for a letter of dismission? Does that prove she was a member? That is evidence of no more than that she thought she was a member. And yet at every step you urge her application as establishing the fact that she was a member of the North Church, and you persistently keep out of sight the explanation which we gave you, which was that Mrs. Moir wrote that application through the over-persuasion of those who thought it more likely that she should be mistaken, than that the North Church should be.

Here, then, in regard to this second requisite to the validity of transfer, we believe the whole question turns. It is a question of title. You, in fact, come to us claiming title to Mrs. Moir. It is for you to show your title. You ask us to restore you and Mrs. Moir to your *status a quo*. There existed no *status* which we have disturbed. If she was your member a year ago, she is your member now; inasmuch as in becoming your member, she must have ceased to be the member of the Sackville Church, who then had no right to dismiss her to us, whose reception of her under such circumstances would be of no force or effect. You are asking us to restore that which we have not and could not take away from you. You had no right a year ago to discipline Mrs. Moir, which you have not now. You have to-day the same right to visit her with all the pains and penalties known to Baptists as you ever had, for anything we have done. If the Sackville Church should convey to us the Gottingen Street Baptist Chapel, or should attempt to convey it, should we have any more right than before to enter into it and hold worship

there to your exclusion? By no means. Your title remains *in statu quo*. So the Sackville Church having terminated its connection, as it must have done with Mrs. Moir, if you were in a position to receive her as a member, had no right to dismiss her to us, and our vote on such dismission is not worth the paper it is written on. Our claim to Mrs. Moir as a member is no stronger than the validity of the Sackville letter.

Believing, as we do, so strongly that you could not receive Mrs. Moir as a member on the letter of recommendation which she brought, it is scarcely worth while to consider whether the remaining requisites of transfer were complied with. Indeed, they could not be validly. In regard to the third and fourth, Mrs. Moir informs us she never asked to be received, and that she never was received by you, and that the right hand of fellowship never was given to her; and it is admitted by you that the last requisite was not attended to. Had the other four requisites been complied with and the last neglected, the Sackville Church would still, according to Baptist usage, have a right to deal with Mrs. Moir as their member. Mrs. Moir came to us with a letter of dismission which appears to us to be in the regular form, though you regard it as "manifestly irregular, and at variance with well understood principles." Here it is:—

"The Baptist Church of Sackville to the Granville Street Baptist Church of Halifax:

DEAR BRETHREN,—This is to certify that Mrs. Wm. Moir is a member in good and regular standing with us, and at her own request is hereby dismissed for the purpose of uniting with you. When she has so united, her connection with us will cease.

Done by order of the church,

FRANCIS WEBBER, Church Clerk.

Sackville, Halifax County, Aug. 12, 1871."

Here is a letter addressed to us by order of the Sackville Church, certifying clearly as to the good standing of Mrs. Moir, and dismissing her for the purpose of joining us. And in regard to the dispute that had arisen between them and the North Church, they say:—"Some little difficulty, we understand, has arisen in reference to Mrs. M.'s membership, the North Church thinking she had united there. No record of her dismission, however, is on our books, and we have no reason why we cannot commend her to your fellowship." We acted upon that letter and received her into our fellowship. What else could we have done? Could we throw back the letter into the face of our sister church? The Sackville Church is as near to us in a more important sense than that of latitude or longitude, as the North Baptist Church of Halifax, and we are as much bound to show respect to one as the other. In our reception of Mrs. Moir, all the five requisites we have mentioned were complied with; and yet, on the principles already laid down, we are bound to admit that, if the Sackville Church had no right to dismiss her to us, our action is a nullity; but if, on the other hand, they had such a right, then we

hold most firmly that she is properly a member of the Granville Street Church and of no other church, and that your claims cannot be sustained.

We have now given you our views at length upon the principal points before us, but there are yet some minor matters in your letters which we cannot pass by without the notice they demand.

In justice to Mrs. Moir we have to say in regard to your charge, that she sought a letter of dismission from you as a means of escape from your discipline, that she informs us and nothing to the contrary appears in this correspondence that the North Church never sought to exercise discipline until she asked for a letter of dismission, and we must repeat what we have already written, but which you do not heed, namely; that she did not make that application voluntarily, but through the over-persuasion of others. Your charge against Mrs. Moir (which was in no way necessary for the end you had in view, in this correspondence if we rightly interpret that end) is a charge of fraud. Consider whether you ought not to withdraw that charge when the fact is as above stated, that you never sought to discipline her until she asked for a dismission, and that too, although as appears from her letter, she had ceased to attend your church two years previously. How could it be a "device" to escape discipline when no discipline had been exercised or threatened? Besides, let us ask how a member of a Baptist Church can escape discipline? You had no right to discipline Mrs. Moir which you have not still. Were a member to attempt to evade discipline, and the fact could be proved would not such a member only the more surely incur discipline? For there would be added to the original ground for discipline, the fraud which had sought to devise a way of escape.

You speak of Mrs. Moir worshiping with you for long years without even a doubt or whisper being raised as to her relationship to you. Her conduct was so exemplary as to raise no question concerning her at all, but had the question been raised, you would have discovered that she never dreamed that she was your member during these years, and she, in point of fact, never ascertained or supposed that you claimed her as a member, until the fact came out in some way, we have not now the means of ascertaining, when at her request our late Pastor sought from the Sackville Church a letter to enable her to join with us.

We must say a few words in regard to your letter, declining to interrogate the Sackville Church. Perhaps we erred in exhibiting our questions to you, and affording you the opportunity of cross-examination, but we certainly thought it was only fair to take that course. You have singled out one of our questions as specially objectionable. It is this, "was the said letter (the letter on which the North Baptist Church claim to have received Mrs. Moir) given by your late Pastor without the vote of the church, and if so given, what end had he in giving it?" Do you suppose that by that question we were in search of an answer that would show that the late Pastor of the Sackville Church had any improper motives in furnishing the letter in question? The

language in which you respectfully decline to interrogate respecting the "motives of a Pastor whose praise is still in many of the churches, and who has long since gone to his reward," is out of place on any other supposition. We have not forgotten the virtues and the labors of our late brother, and did not imagine for a moment that he had any end in view but simply that of commending Mrs. Moir to the North Church and to us, but we desired to ascertain what in the opinion of the Sackville Church was the full meaning of the letter.

Our answer is before you, and our brethren of the North Church will no doubt carefully review the whole matter. If their conclusion should be that Mrs. Moir never was a member of the North Church (and we do not see how it can be other than that) they will doubtless acknowledge their error. If on the contrary the conclusion should be that Mrs. Moir was and is a member, then they will either condemn the Sackville Church or the Granville Street Church, we leave them to determine which.

Little needs to be said in regard to the desirability of harmony and co-operation existing as heretofore. It must be assumed that both the North Church and ourselves desire that our relations should be of the most friendly character. That is a matter which does not gain by mention, for we would be unworthy the name of Churches if we did not most heartily desire it.

We have given our views plainly and clearly. It is matter of regret to us that we differ on the facts of the case, but such difference we found unavoidable, and this difference is not confined to the statements whose correctness we have had to call in question in this letter.

We trust our correspondence will result in a better understanding of the two important points discussed in this letter, namely, the functions of committees, and the transference of members from one church to another. We cannot well over-estimate the importance of arriving at a proper understanding of the principles which should guide us in these matters.

On behalf of the Granville Street Church.

E. M. SAUNDERS,
ALEX. ROBINSON,
BRENTON H. EATON. } Committee.

HALIFAX, 23RD MAY, 1872.

To the Granville Street Church, Pastor and Members :

DEAR BRETHREN,—Yours of the 3rd April the undersigned received on the 8th of same month.

For reasons which we need not here detail, this our reply has been unexpectedly delayed. The North Baptist Church complained that the Granville Street Church their near neighbours in violation of well established principles had received into their Communion Mrs. Moir, a member of the North Church, without the usual or customary letter of dismission, knowing long before the date of her reception and at the time, that she was under the

discipline of the North Church. That, according to the Records of the North Church she had united with them on the 6th of February, 1857, and had been continuously from that time for upwards of *fourteen years*, a member and in their Communion, except perhaps for the short period while under discipline. All this with full particulars having been fully and faithfully communicated to the Granville Street Church, by a formal written document or report, adopted by the North Church January, 1870, and forwarded to your present Pastor, Rev. Mr. Saunders, as therein set forth, for their information. See report on Mrs. Moir's case of above date, and copy set forth in our letter to you of 30th November, 1871.

The undersigned by a resolution of the North Church, November, 1871, a copy of which was also furnished, were authorized to conduct a correspondence with the Granville Street Church on the subject, and report to the North Church as occasion might require.

The reply of the Granville Street Church April 3rd, to our several communications, contains so much that is immaterial to the single point under consideration, presenting so many side issues altogether foreign to the merits of the matter, with arguments and illustrations drawn from secular sources—without application, having no bearing, as the undersigned respectfully conceive on the case, they trust they may be pardoned if they decline to allow their attention to be diverted beyond what is indispensable from the one single point in controversy, namely, the right of one Baptist church in the light of the disclosures produced by this correspondence, to treat another of the same faith and order, as has been done in the present case.

The first page and half of your letter is taken up with explanations on the subject of delay, &c. The remainder of the second, third and fourth are devoted to the subject of the powers conferred upon the undersigned by their constituent the North Church, and the manner of their exercise. We had described them as "plenary" for correspondence, and nothing more was pretended or attempted. Had the Granville Street Church chosen to ignore the existence of such a committee and the action of the North Church in appointing it, perhaps it might have been open to them to do so, and they would have borne the responsibility. But when they decided to reply to the committee's letter, it was but courteous, that they should address the committee and not the church appointing them. The undersigned having however expressly waived all objection to the informality of your addressing the church on the occasion, not them, and the correspondence having since progressed in due form, they can see no occasion now for the dissertation referred to, or for further remarks thereon. The fifth page of your letter is occupied with an expression of "regret and surprise" that "some things" in your previous correspondence had been ignored, &c. The "some things" if we understand rightly here referred to, is a statement by a Deacon of the North Church, alleged to have been made to your Pastor that there was nothing in their (the North Baptist Church) books to show that sister Moir

had ever been dismissed, &c. As to this matter, so far from ignoring or not replying to it, in our letter of 25th Dec., in answer to yours of 14th, we wrote as follows, "The undersigned referring again to the conversation spoken of as held with pastors, or deacons, or members, wish it to be clearly understood, that the church they represent speak only by its Clerk, &c."

A word, however, now as to this. The Deacon that was, but is no longer such, having been excluded from the fellowship of the North Church for reasons in no way connected with this matter, either knew or he did not know what the records of the North Baptist Church contained in reference to Mrs. Moir. It matters little which, in one aspect—for these records speak for themselves, and they give his statement a flat contradiction. They give the date of Mrs. Moir's reception, with full particulars, entered 5th February, 1857, at a time and under circumstances, when there could be no motive to mislead or misrepresent. But whatever this so-called Deacon may have said, as remarked already, matters little—because, eighteen months before Mrs. Moir was received by you, namely, in January, 1870, your church and pastor knew that the North Baptist Church records contained an entry on the subject. A report of that date, adopted by the church, a copy of which was furnished you by order, among other things, contained the following:—"They (the committee reporting) find, on reference to the records of the church, that sister Moir united with the church on the 6th day of February, 1857, having been received by letter." And you were then further informed, that for eight years, or until 1865, her walk and Christian deportment were exemplary and unexceptionable. That she then absented herself and entered upon a career of irregularity described, and that suitable means were resorted to for reclaiming her, by committees waiting upon her and otherwise. Let it not, therefore, brethren, be again pretended that the Granville Street Church were not fully aware of the facts of the case; let no further attempt be made then to discredit the records of the church, nor the church itself, that by adopting made the report its act, merely because a refractory member chooses to deny what a host of living witnesses (all the contemporary members of the North Church) know to be true. In your letter of the 14th December, 1871, seeking to defend Mrs. Moir from the consequences of her own acts, in applying under date of 6th December, 1867, to the Rev. Mr. Goucher, our pastor, for a letter of dismission from the North Church, you there, referring to this letter, state that "our (Granville Street pastor) and others who assumed that she (Mrs. Moir) had forgotten the occasion of her reception, overpersuaded her to apply to the North Church for a dismission." And yet the North Church is asked to treat its own records as a myth to substitute Mrs. Moir's memory instead—to believe that "the pastor of the Granville Street Church and others" would ask her to stultify herself, commit a fraud on the Granville Church: and that she, willing to do so, actually wrote the letter of the 6th December, 1867, asking a dismission from a church of which she never was, and if we are to believe the representations in your last letter, she never considered herself to be a member! Is this, then, the

only means of escape available from the dilemma into which your church seems to be placed? We dwell on this branch of the case, because it brings concession *in writing*, proof home that "the pastor and other members of the Granville Street Church with a knowledge of the facts as to the correspondence on our part presents them, received into membership without a letter of dismission, one whom, not the North Church only, not herself only, but one whom *they themselves*—at least those so persuading her—in December 1867, regarded as (and in December, 1869, were, by a written report informed was) a member of the North Church! Knowing, too, that she was under discipline, and could not, while in that state, properly be dismissed. More than this, Granville Street Church and its Pastor, knew what the offences were for which the North Church was disciplining its member, they knew that she did not deny the charges, and yet without further inquiry than the paper given by the Sackville Church,—given, they and we now know exactly under what circumstances and with the postscript meaning much, as it did, attached (for the previous pastor of Granville Street Church as you admit had applied to Sackville for such a letter once before, and it was refused.) Under such circumstances, we say, without notice to the North Church, or hearing what they might have to object, Granville Street Church receives Mrs. Moir, and maintains that such conduct is courteous, and respectful and proper towards a sister Church! Before passing away from this part of the case, a word as to the conversation alleged to have been held by the Pastor of the North Church and one or more members with the Pastor of the Sackville Church. We refer to this reluctantly, because for reasons already given, casual conversations with members should not be used, we think, in cases like this. And we now thus explain only lest unfavourable inference might be drawn if we passed it over in silence, and because some grave misapprehension evidently exists. The pastor of the North Church who has taken no part in this controversy nor seen this correspondence, on having his attention called to the paragraph referring to him, authorizes this committee to say, that although he well remembers the conversation alluded to, and the particulars of it, yet he affirms, that he must have been altogether misunderstood, for whatever the impression received he certainly gave no opinion, and had no intention of expressing any, as to what "the better way would be for the Sackville Church to act in this case." No other name being given we are not able to furnish further explanation under this head.

The 6th page of your letter, and all of the 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th with part of the 13th are devoted to the task of proving what constitutes a letter of dismission from one Baptist Church to another, and that the requisites as between Sackville and the North Church in Mrs. Moir's case were not complied with. The illustrations and reference to cases of apprenticeship and conveyance of real estate smack of the world, and worldly things, far too much, to afford any argument, even under any of the five requisites enumerated, to weigh with a Christian church, in dismiss-

ing and receiving members. But the dogma upon which the argument is based that "among Baptists associated as the Churches of our associations are, five things necessarily combine to constitute a complete transference of a member from one Church to another," lacks *this essential element*, that, no authority is given, and none exists which the undersigned as representing an independent Baptist Church, are willing to acknowledge, or recognize. Every case rests on its own peculiar merits.

After Paul's conversion, "he went up to Jerusalem and essayed to join himself to the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple, but Barnabas took him and brought him to the Apostles, &c., &c. And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem." This is probably the first reception recorded of a member of a Christian Church coming from another locality—for he had just arrived from Damascus, where he had been preaching, and came away somewhat in haste. The apostle himself, however, on one occasion wrote a letter in which Timothy joined to the brethren and church worshipping in the house of Philemon, and by it he dismissed Onesimus, who, we may assume, was duly received. Whether any answer was returned, or any, or all of the other requisites according to Granville Street Church, were complied with, the record saith not.

Conceding to every other what they claim on behalf of the North Church, the undersigned in the most unequivocal manner here once for all deny the right of Granville Street or any other church to decide whether the North Church exercised sound discretion as to the nature and amount of evidence that justifies the reception of a member, whether appearing before them with documentary papers in the nature of letters of dismission, or on oral statements. That a member received fourteen years ago and upwards, who had walked in harmony with the North Church for eight long years, and then falling under its discipline, shall be permitted to deny the entries of her membership made in the church records of those dates—deny what the church knows to be true, viz: that she was a member during this period, enjoyed all the privileges of any other member, thus corroborating the church entries and records—if they needed it—and that a sister church apprised of these facts, should side with her, and declare and try to maintain that she had never been dismissed or received, or if so, only upon informal and insufficient documents, and so endeavour to defeat the discipline of the North Church, and discredit and falsify her records, is a proceeding so unkind, so irregular, so unlike the christian comity that obtains among Baptist churches, that a spark of respect entertained for herself, her existence, independence, and proceedings compels the North Church to take measures to submit this controversy for decision to some impartial tribunal—come what may.

The special pleading paraded, and based upon the letter of the Sackville Church—issued under a mistake, as will presently be seen, with its qualifying portscript already referred to, is too transparent, and one would have thought that with the information previously possessed, this was a case calling for

great care and caution on the part of a friendly sister church. That if room for the shadow of a reasonable doubt existed; Pastor and members would hesitate long before taking action condemnatory of, and overruling the discipline of the North Church—before treating her records as unfaithful and unreliable, her membership and their votes as unworthy of respect. Having already received Mrs. Moir into your communion, knowing all the while the irregularity of her walk, whether a member of the Sackville or the North Church, and which she has never denied, though it be but a mere waste of words here, it is nevertheless our duty to inform the Granville Street Church that her statement that she was not attempted to be disciplined till she applied for her dismissal, is a statement entirely destitute of truthfulness, and unworthy of credit. The North Church has command of ample testimony to that effect.

If we may be permitted to illustrate our views by arguments drawn from familiar relations in life—relations much more apposite and appropriate and to the point than any reference to the law of apprenticeship or that of the transfer of estates, we should say that in all its leading features this case might aptly be likened to one where a wife deserts the husband to whom she had been married, and with whom she had lived for a decade and upwards. And when remonstrated with for her infidelity she undertakes to shelter herself—and her new-found friends assist in defending her—upon the ground that the marriage certificate cannot be found, or the witness is dead, or the record is defective, or the banns had not been published the number of times required by law, or some equally futile plea. The result, were such reasoning to find favour, would not be more scandalous or disastrous to public morals, we think, than they will be found damaging and destructive to all Baptist polity if the defence now set up by Mrs. Moir and backed by Halifax Granville Street Baptist Church, were to prevail.

The 15th page of your letter is devoted to the subject of the examination of the Sackville Church by interrogations with remarks quite irrelevant to the merits of the matter in hand. What that questioning brought to light seems to be designedly suppressed, at least has not been submitted. We have it now, however, from Sackville. Had this case rested upon the facts as appearing in the records of the North Church, and the full and thorough knowledge of them brought home to the Granville Street Church, of the true state of things, how unfair, how unkind it was to intervene between a church and its erring member, or even one they thought and believed to be, and had treated as a member for so long a time! But what have the Granville Street Church to say to the recent discoveries made by Sackville Church on further search among their records?

Since the receipt of your letter of 3rd April, the undersigned have ascertained from the officers of the Sackville Church that they have now discovered a document among their records containing a list of members, with remarks, &c. On that list appears the name of Mrs. Maria Moir, and

opposite it, a note, thus:—See page 65 of Church Book. On turning to page 65, were found, the minutes of a church conference and the following entry: "*Sister dismissed to join North Church, Halifax.*" This entry, the undersigned are given to understand, the Sackville Church, though having overlooked, admit, affords *proof conclusive*, that Mrs. Moir was duly dismissed by them to join the North Church, as contended by the latter throughout. In reply to the questions propounded by Granville Street Church to Sackville Church, among other things this new discovery we are informed, was made and a copy or extract was forwarded to you. If so, this important information was in possession of the Granville Street Church on the 3rd April, the date of your last letter, and yet you make no reference to the fact. If it were, then the omission to refer to a link of testimony so conclusive, from *your standpoint*—that Sackville, that once before refused an application of your previous pastor for a letter, had now acted under a mistake—would be the strangest of all the strange things characterizing this correspondence. If the contention on the part of Mrs. Moir, adopted and defended by Granville Street Church, adopted by them as the basis of their proceeding, in receiving her into fellowship be true—then, among the consequences inevitable flows the following, namely:—The entry on the North Church books, that she was received as a member, and had the right hand of fellowship extended to her (by the Rev. Mr. Bently, then pastor), is false, if not fraudulent. But the clerk of the church of that day, 1857, now its Senior Deacon and Chairman of the Committee addressing you, made the entry himself. It is in his own handwriting, and he knows and now testifies in signing this letter that the entry is true: and having been an active leading member of the church up to the present, he now declares that he never heard it mentioned or whispered, that Mrs. Moir claimed not to be a member of the North Church, until somewhere in the year 1871, shortly before or about the time he heard she had been received by Granville Street Church. It was thoughtful on your part to suggest that the charges against Mrs. Moir should be, under such circumstances, withdrawn, and an acknowledgement be made by the North Church, or their Committee accordingly! Whether intended as a candid exposition of sentiment, or as irony, or as satire matters not much. If this committee, or the church they represent, were to discover that they had erred through mistake or otherwise, we hasten to assure you that they would need no invitation or suggestion from any source to make the amend without delay. And if the church addressed takes that course, and acts on that principle, we predict for this correspondence an early friendly and satisfactory termination.

From England under date of 21st of March, 1872, George Robins, Clerk of the Royal Engineer Department, who filled the office of Church Clerk succeeding Deacon McCully, (being superintendent of the Sabbath school as well), a gentleman well known to both churches, and who was one of the visiting committee associated with Deacon Thompson (one of the committee addressing you) to wait on Mrs. Moir, writes in reply to a letter addressed to him on the subject as follows. We premise however by quoting in contrast

the unauthentic statement of Granville Street Church touching a matter of which *she could know nothing* except by mere hearsay—"Her, Mrs. Moir's conduct was so exemplary as to cause no question concerning her at all, but had the question been raised you would have discovered that she never dreamed that she was your member during these years."

In direct contradiction, hear now, what our late brother Robins who had the means of *personally* knowing says: "I have a distinct recollection of twice being appointed by the Church with Deacon D. Thompson, to wait on Mrs. Moir with reference to her connection with and conduct towards the North Church, and I can positively affirm that on neither of these occasions did Mrs. Moir affirm that she was not a member of the Church, but the contrary, and on my informing her of the decision of the Church after our visit, she expressed her gratitude that the church had been so lenient towards her by allowing her name to stand on the Church Record." Further on, "Mrs. Moir knows well that she did then join the church, and always recognized herself as a member in every conversation I ever had with her."

P.S.—"I think brother Thompson will bear me out in saying, that at our last visit which was in the winter season, Mrs. Moir repeatedly said she had no ill-feeling toward any member of the North Church, but her health did not admit her to walk so far just then, and all her friends attending Granville Street, made her wish to go there also. We on our part assured her that none in the church had any ill-feeling toward her, and would gladly welcome her back, but there was a duty for her to perform to the church after her conduct for so long a time in walking disorderly toward it, and which must be done before a dismissing letter could be given her to unite with Granville Street."

All this so far as Deacon Thompson is referred to, he now by his signature to this paper corroborates and solemnly affirms to be true. Will the Granville Street Church in the face of this testimony venture to repeat that "you never attempted to discipline her (Mrs. Moir) till after she asked for a dismission? The recklessness of such a statement is amazing! And then is added, "You had no right to discipline Mrs. Moir which you have not still." This must be intended for biting sarcasm. What avails discipline when another church of the same faith and order, has the recalcitrant member in full communion, defending her conduct and defiantly denouncing such discipline? It requires little consideration to notice how lightly church discipline seems to be regarded where such ideas are entertained, and what is thought of the relationship which exists or ought to exist, between and among Baptist churches. To go through the form of excluding Mrs. Moir, now that she is a member of Granville Street Church, and yet take no cognizance of the church's action in receiving and defending her, would be a solemn mockery—offensive to God, and obnoxious in the eyes of Christian men. If anything could surprise, such an utterance coming from the Granville Street Church might well do so.

The desire to maintain amicable, kind, and fraternal relations, has prompted this Committee thus representing the North Church, to use all the arguments and persuasion at command, to avoid, if possible, an open rupture—a breach, destructive of relations easy to wound, difficult to heal.

To witness estrangements among Baptist Churches, their Pastors and members, carried to such an extent as recently occurred at Sackville, where delegates from Dartmouth, Granville Street Church (and elsewhere) were congregated on invitation to comprise a Council, Pastors and delegates refusing to greet or speak to each other, and yet proceeding with, and taking part in the Solemn Act of laying on of hands to ordain a Christian Brother to the ministry, was an event so painful, so revolting in the eyes of spectators and professing Christians to whom it became known, that we have felt, and feel the force of the exhortation. "These things ought not so to be." And yet if one Baptist Church ignores, and sets at naught the discipline of another, what else need be expected.

Brethren, we feel that it involves the very existence of the North Church, that her records and proceedings should be honest in the sight of God and man, and capable of being defended before the denomination and the world. "The Church of God (says an Apostle) is the pillar and ground of truth." If it be not such, it is nothing.

The undersigned have had no mere victory in view in this correspondence. Expostulation strong and earnest, as your Pastor and Senior deacon are aware, was resorted to with them by the Chairman of this Committee in presence of the Pastor of the North Church, and Bro. Parsons, another of the Committee, before the North Church took action or directed a correspondence to be opened on this subject, and it was then asked and most earnestly entreated that Granville Street Church herself should take the initiation and correct her mistake. They were then told plainly, though unofficially, as was explained, that the North Church could not consent to have its discipline trodden down and disregarded by any sister church. But all to no purpose.

This Committee believes, and they think that impartial christians will concur in the view, that their church records and the corroborating facts and testimony uncontradicted, (except by Mrs. Moir, the delinquent disciple) without the recent discovery made by Sackville Church, were abundant or ample to convince any but the most sceptical—such as are unwilling to be convinced—that truth, candour, and the merits of this case throughout have been and are with the North Church, and that she has good cause to feel aggrieved. But in the light of the recent important discovery, there is no longer room for doubt.

Desirous of not laying themselves open to the charge of a want of respect towards a sister Church, their arguments or positions advanced, this Committee have found it necessary to extend their comments to an undesirable length.

But they now on their part, propose to close the correspondence, unless something unexpected should make further reply necessary.

Remaining yours, &c.,

J. McCULLY, }
D. THOMPSON, } Committee.
J. PARSONS. }

The Sackville (N. S.) Baptist Church, to the North Baptist Church, Halifax :

DEAR BRETHREN,—In reply to your letter respecting the membership of Mrs. William Moir, we beg to make the following (among other) statements.

We had found no record on our books of her being dismissed from us. On farther search of our books, however, we found a record of our dismissing Mrs. Moir to unite with you.

After due consideration, however, we deem it expedient to rescind our motion dismissing her to Granville Street Church. In taking this step we have been influenced by a desire for peace and the enforcing of proper discipline in our churches.

In behalf of the Church.

F. WEBBER, *Church Clerk*

Sackville, June 13th, 1872.



unless

iltee.

alifax :

ship of
ements.
us. On
g Mrs.

and our
ep we
discip-

lerk



